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Weekly Acute Respiratory Infection Report

Public Health Wales

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre

Report week: 50 (ending 15 December 2024)

Headline

- **Influenza is circulating**, case numbers continued to increase as expected for this early point in the flu season. Influenza A(H1N1) is currently being detected in the highest numbers, but influenza A(H3N2) cases are also being confirmed, with lower levels of influenza B cases.
- Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) is circulating, activity has decreased in the most recent week but remains at very high intensity levels.
- COVID-19 case numbers have remained stable in recent weeks.
- GP consultations for acute respiratory infections have increased in the most recent week. ARI consultation rates in ages 0-5 have started to decrease.
- According to EuroMoMo method, 'no excess' was reported in all-cause mortality in the most recent week (Week 49).

Foreword

This report replaces the previously separate weekly reports on COVID-19, influenza and other respiratory infections. It is published on a weekly basis between week 40 (October) and 20 (May) of the following year, and on a fortnightly basis during the summer period.

This report summarises the latest available information from several Public Health Wales surveillance schemes, reports on Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) and information from other sources.

Additional information is available from the links below.

- [Weekly ARI Hospital Admissions Dashboard](#)
- [EuroMOMO European mortality monitoring](#)
- [Public Health Wales Respiratory Infection Mortality updates](#)
- [COVID-19 variant summary](#)

The structure of this report is based on the surveillance pyramid (from mild to severe infection outcomes), illustrated below. Icons alongside chapter headings indicate the types of information included in the chapter.



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High Level Summary Points

	Community infection indicators	Severe infection indicators
Overall Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI)	<p>The 3-week trend in consultation rate per 100,000 for acute respiratory infection (ARI) has increased.</p> <p>Consultations with sentinel GPs for acute respiratory infection (ARI) increased compared to last week.</p>	<p>Admissions in patients testing positive for influenza, COVID-19 or RSV have increased in the most recent weeks (6% of total admissions).</p>
Influenza	<p>Influenza is now circulating and the season is likely still a number of weeks away from the peak.</p> <p>The overall proportion of samples testing positive increased last week to 21.1%.</p> <p>Consultations for influenza-like illness (ILI) with sentinel GPs increased compared to the previous week, and are above the medium activity threshold. 113 cases of influenza were confirmed from symptomatic sentinel GP network patients across Wales last week.</p>	<p>The number of confirmed cases of community acquired influenza admitted to hospital increased to 195 in the most recent week.</p> <p>In the most recent week, there were 379 in-patient cases of confirmed influenza, 19 of whom were in critical care.</p>
Influenza type breakdown	<p>Since 2024 Week 40: 2,007 total influenza cases confirmed (167 influenza A(H3N2), 411 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 1,331 influenza A untyped and 98 influenza B).</p> <p>In the most recent week: 28 confirmed cases of influenza A(H3N2), 146 cases of influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 458 influenza A untyped and 25 influenza B)</p>	
COVID-19	<p>The overall proportion of samples testing positive decreased to 3.4% in hospital and non-sentinel GP practices.</p> <p>Consultations with sentinel GPs for ARI decreased in the most recent week.</p> <p>Confirmed cases of COVID-19 in sentinel GP patients is stable.</p>	<p>The number of confirmed cases of community acquired COVID-19 admitted to hospital increased to 42 in the most recent week.</p> <p>In the most recent week, there were 235 in-patient cases of confirmed COVID-19, two of whom were in critical care</p>
RSV	<p>RSV is circulating, with activity at very high intensity levels in children aged up to 5y.</p> <p>Incidence per 100,000 population in children aged up to 5y decreased to 70 in the most recent week.</p>	<p>The number of confirmed cases of community acquired RSV admitted to hospital increased to 98 in the most recent week.</p> <p>In the most recent week, there were 164 in-patient cases of confirmed RSV, six of whom were in critical care.</p>
Other respiratory pathogens	<p>Confirmed cases and test positivity for rhinovirus have increased in recent weeks and for adenovirus remain elevated. Detections of enterovirus continue, with EV-D68 as the predominant recent type.</p>	



1. Community surveillance indicators

GP Consultations

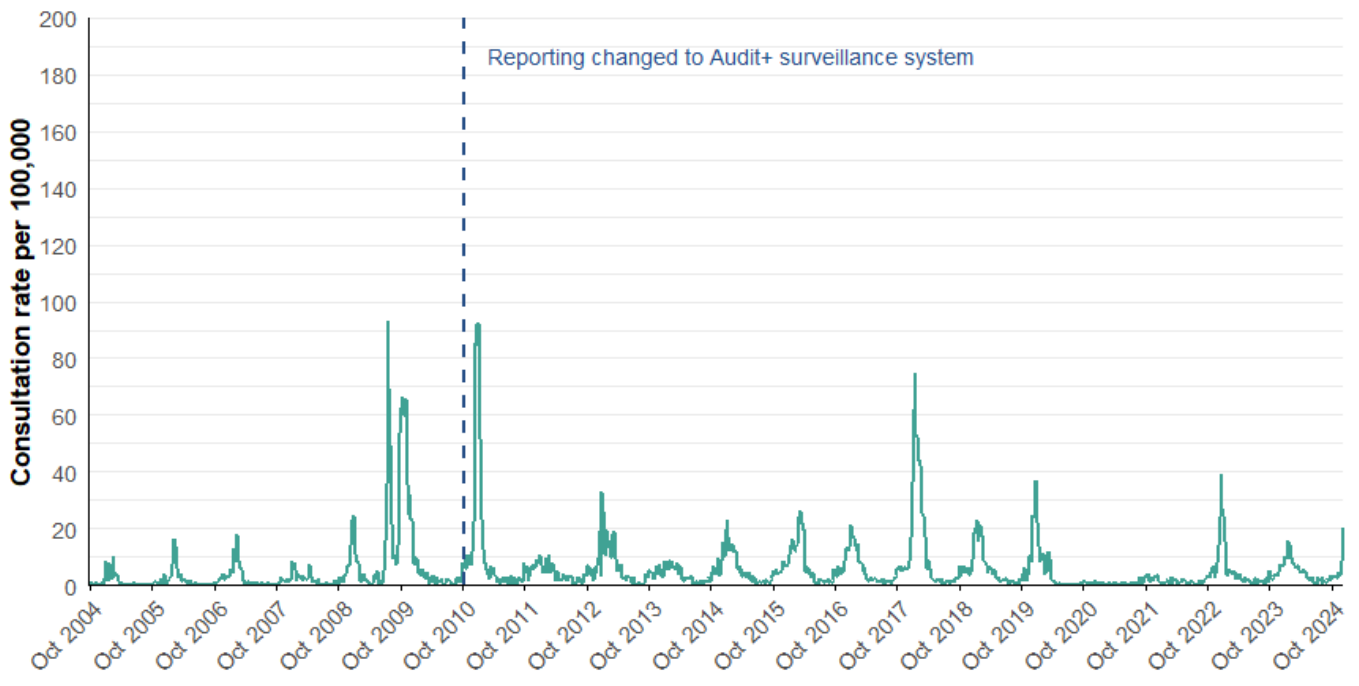
- According to data from the Sentinel GP Network, the sentinel GP consultation rate for influenza-like illness (ILI) is at medium intensity and the three-week trend is decreasing (Figures 1.2, 1.3).
- There were 20.4 ILI consultations per 100,000 practice population in the most recent week, an increase compared to the previous week (8.4 consultations per 100,000).
- In the most recent week, using all available data from general practices, there were 24.2 ARI consultations per 100,000 practice population, an increase from 22.7 in the previous week (Table 1.2). The highest rates were found in people aged under 1 year (1630.7) followed by people aged 1 to 4 (1146.1) and people aged 5 to 14 (340.4) (Figure 1.4).
- Surveillance indicators for acute respiratory infections in GP consultation data in Wales are increasing in people aged under 5 years (Figure 1.4).

Ambulance Calls

- The number of ambulance calls recorded referring to syndromic indicators increased from 2,066 in the previous week to 2,105 in the latest reporting week (Figure 1.5, Table 1.3).
- Calls for cardiac or respiratory arrest increased compared to the previous week. Calls for chest pain, difficulty breathing were stable or decreased compared to the previous week. (figure 1.5, Table 1.3).

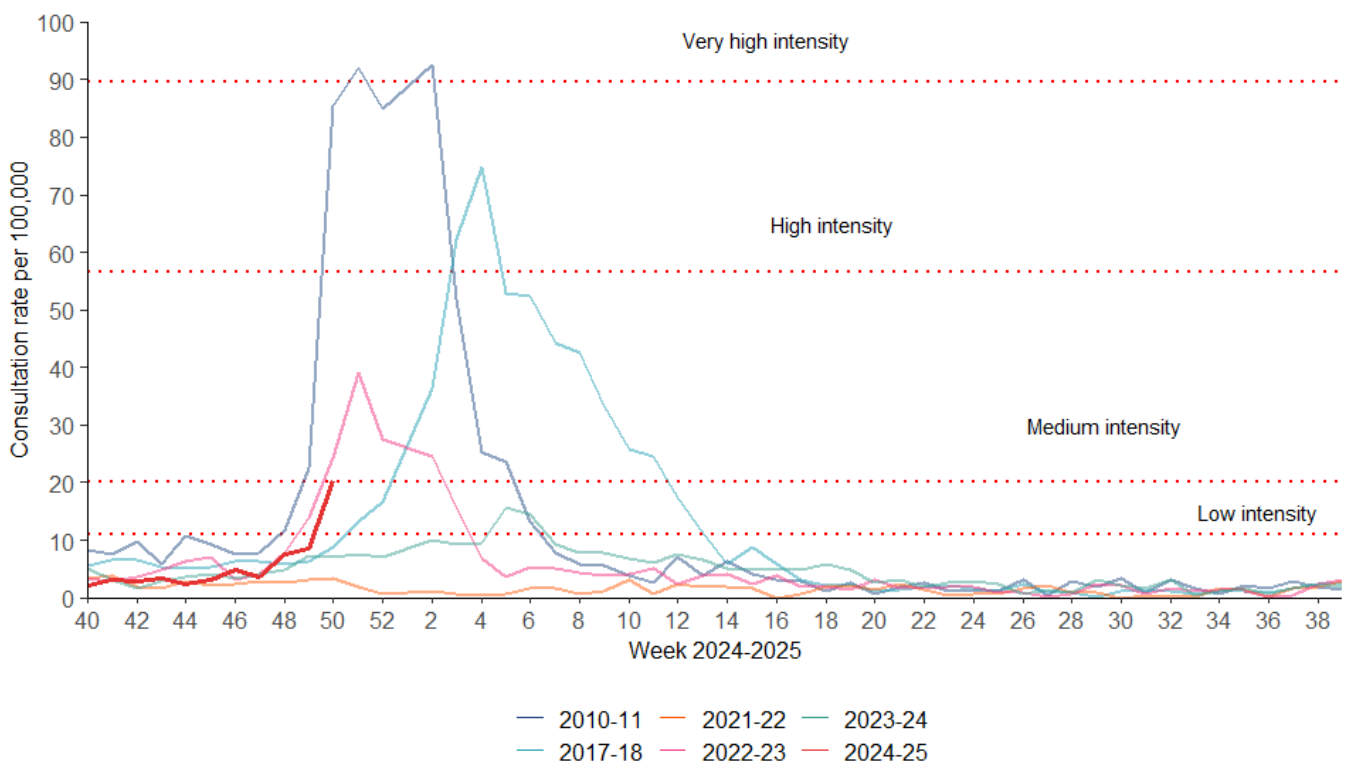
GP consultations – Sentinel Network

Figure 1.1. Sentinel GP network clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population (Week 40 1996 - Week 50, 2024).



Data correct as of 17/12/2024

Figure 1.2. Sentinel GP network clinical consultation rate for ILI per 100,000 practice population.



Data correct as of 17/12/2024

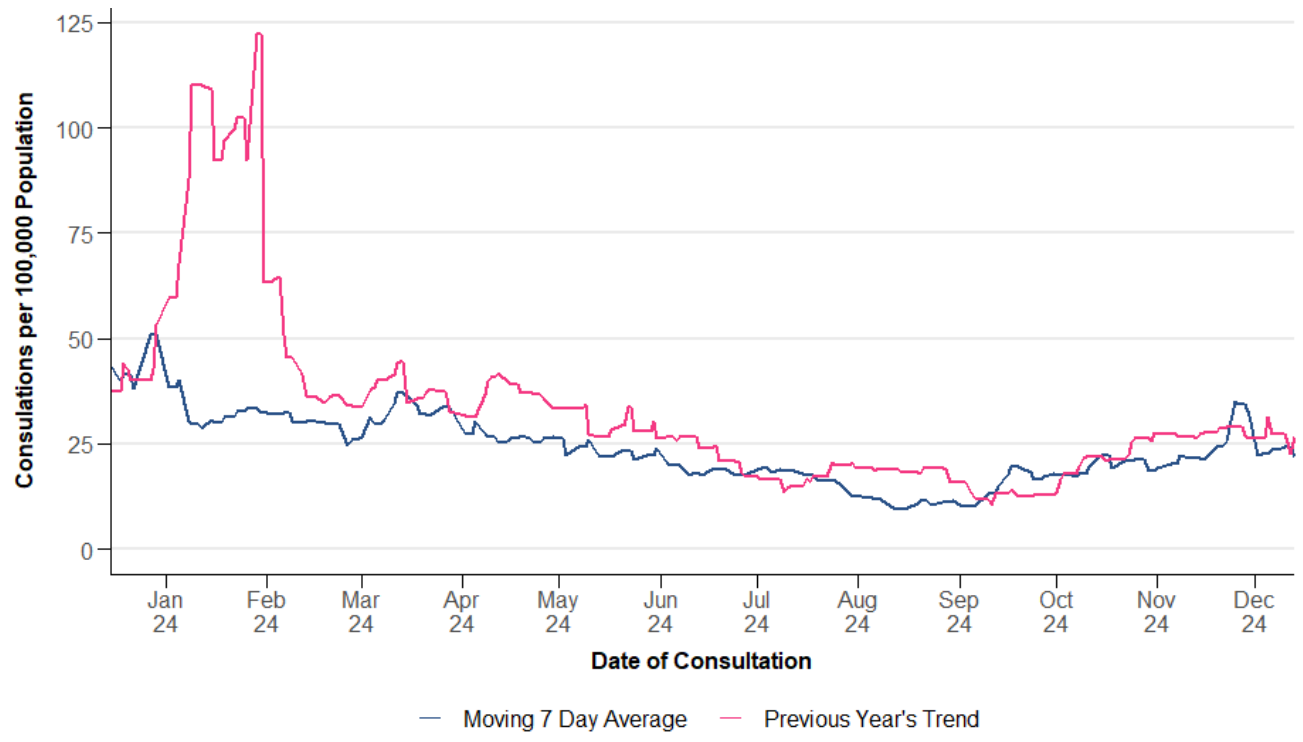
GP Consultations - All Wales

Table 1.2. Summary of GP consultations per 100,000 practice population in Wales, by indicator, for week 50, 2024. This table uses all available GP surveillance data (from sentinel and non-sentinel practices).

Indicator	Current Reporting Week	Preceding Week	Equivalent Period Last Year
ARI	24.24	22.69	27.55
COVID-19	1.28	1.72	23.73
LRTI	9.36	8.83	10.39
Pneumonia	0.05	0.03	0.02
Severe asthma	1.00	0.82	1.50
URTI	14.92	13.90	17.30
Total	50.85	47.99	80.49

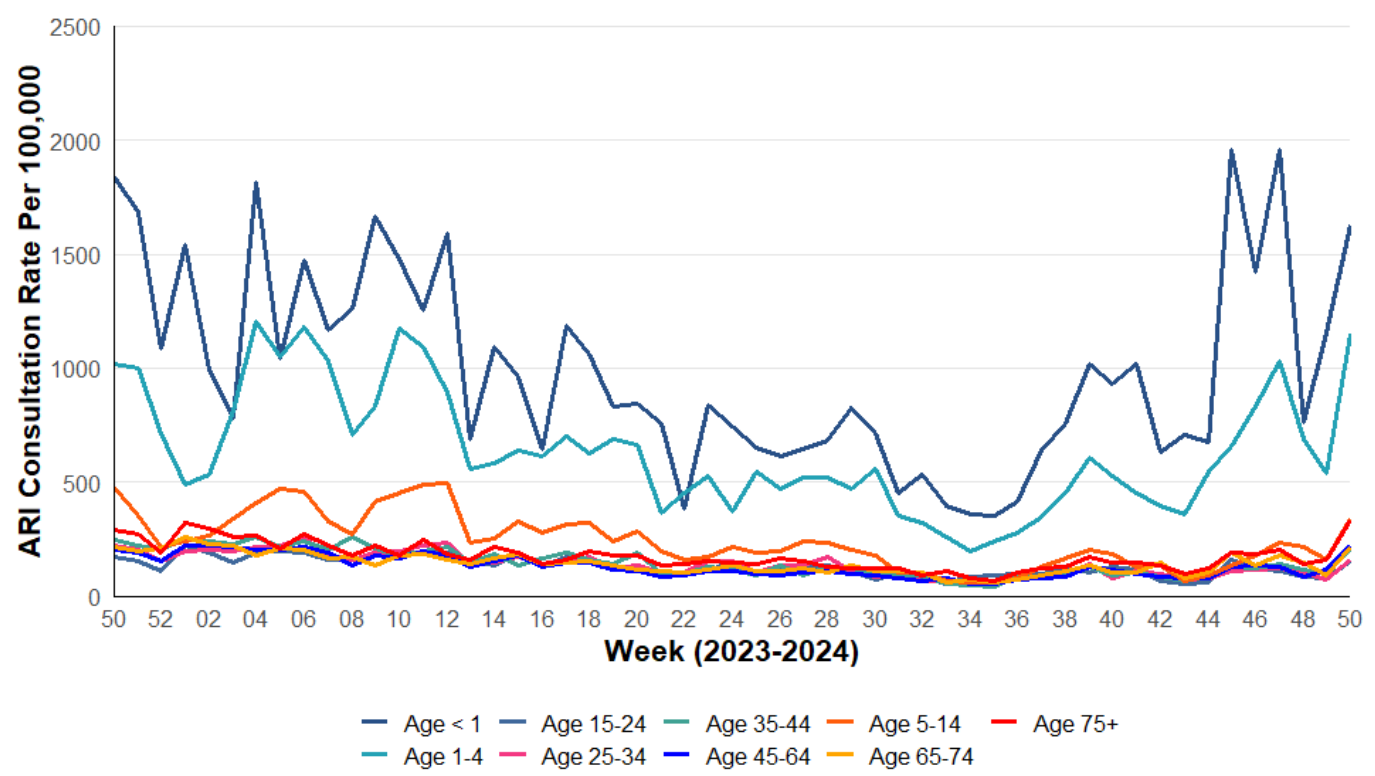
NB: "Current reporting week" refers to the average daily rate in the current reporting week. "Preceding week" refers to the average daily rate in the preceding week. "Equivalent period last year" refers to the average daily rate in the equivalent period last year.

Figure 1.3. All Wales GP consultation rates for ILI per 100,000 practice population for Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI).



Data correct as of 17/12/2024

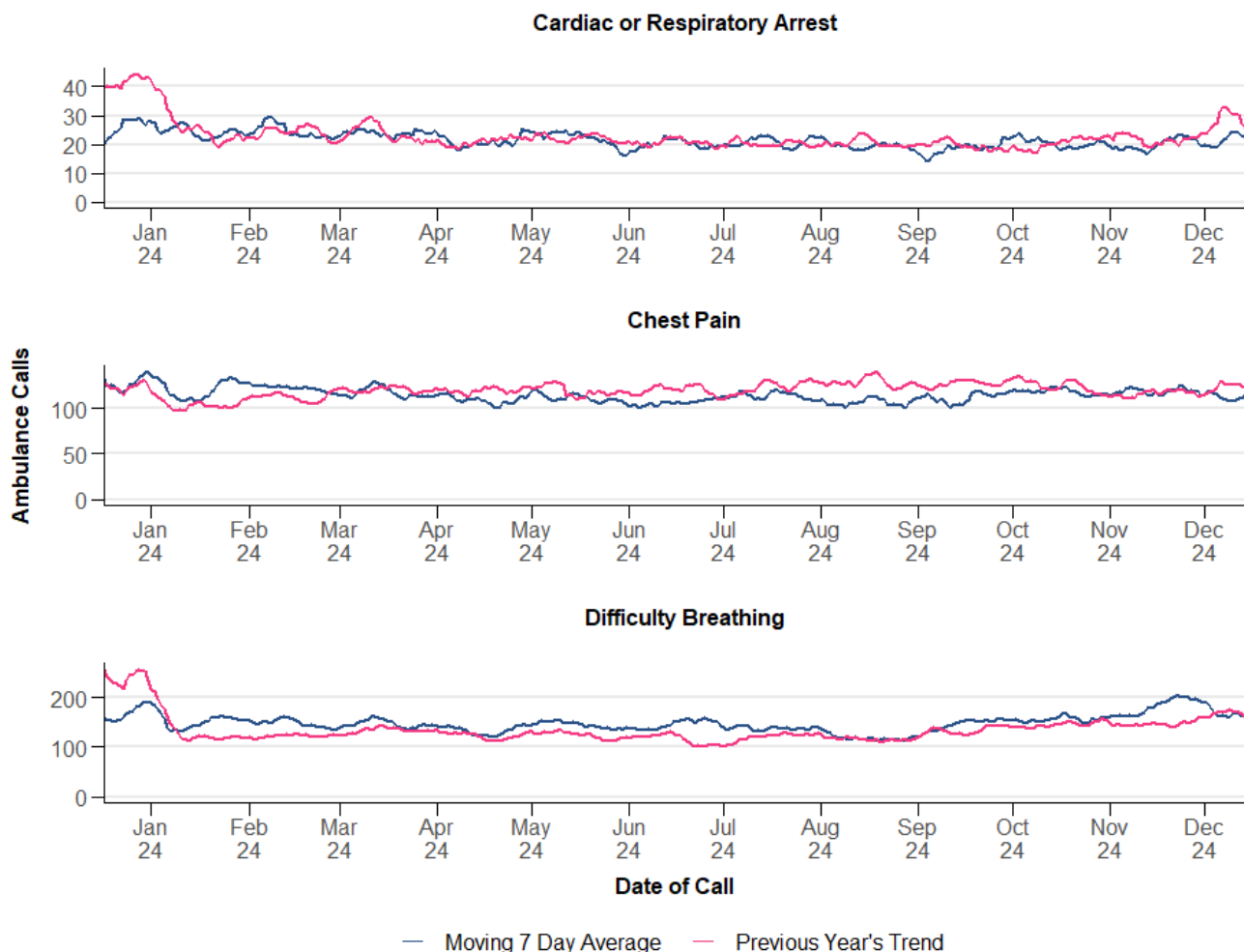
Figure 1.4. All Wales clinical consultation rates for Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) per 100,000 practice population, by age bands.



Data correct as of 17/12/2024

Ambulance Calls

Figure 1.5. Rolling seven-day average for ambulance calls for both current and the previous year, by symptom. This summary analysis uses data provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.



Data correct as of 17/12/2024

Table 1.3. Summary of weekly number of Ambulance calls, by symptom in Wales, for week 50, 2024). This summary analysis uses data provided by the Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Indicator	Current Reporting Week	Preceding Week	Equivalent Period Last Year
Cardiac or Respiratory Arrest	167	131	200
Chest Pain	774	804	858
Difficulty Breathing	1,164	1,131	1,171
Total	2,105	2,066	2,229

NB: "Current reporting week" refers to the total number of calls in in the current reporting week. "Preceding week" refers to the total number of calls in in the preceding week. "Equivalent period last year" refers to the total number of calls in in the equivalent period last year.



2. Virological Surveillance

Wales Sentinel GP and Sentinel Community Pharmacy Network

- There were 431 surveillance samples from patients with ILI symptoms collected by sentinel GPs and community pharmacies during Week 50, 2024, as at 18/12/2024 (Table 2.1, Figure 2.1).
- The most commonly detected pathogens were influenza A (103) followed by rhinovirus (68) and RSV (57). Of the 431 tests, 34.1% were negative for all respiratory pathogens (Table 2.1, Figure 2.1).

All Wales Datastore Respiratory Infection Testing

- There were 1,482 samples receiving multiplex respiratory panel testing, collected from patients attending hospitals and non-sentinel GPs during week 50 (Table 2.2, Figure 2.2).
- The most commonly detected pathogens were influenza A (313) followed by RSV (180) and rhinovirus (156). Of the 1482 tests, 49.1% were negative for all respiratory pathogens (Table 2.2, Figure 2.2).

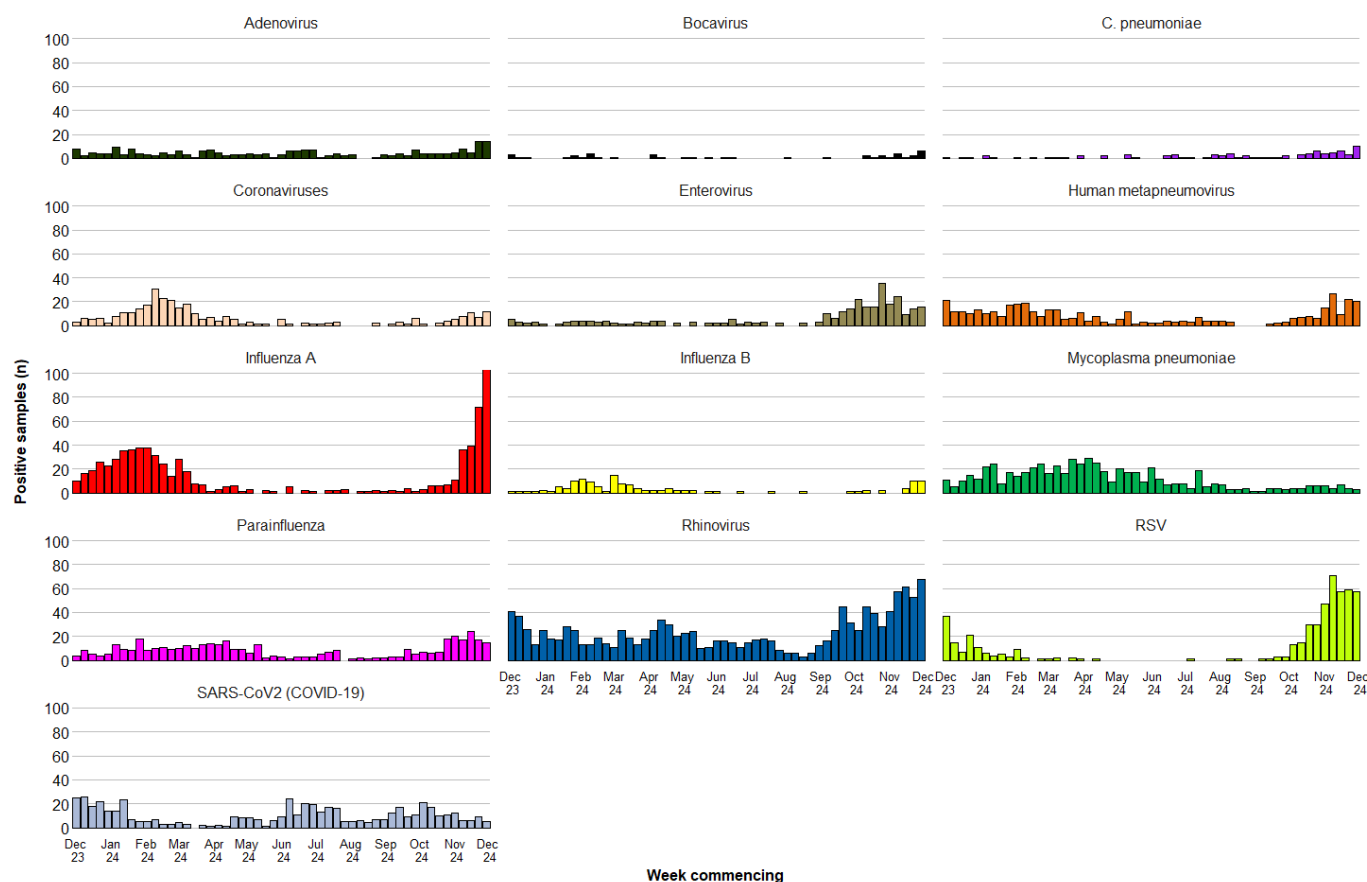
Additionally, during Week 50, 743 samples from patients were tested for influenza, RSV and SARS-CoV-2 only (Figure 2.3). Of these the following tested positive:

- 228 for influenza (216 for influenza A, 12 for influenza B, zero for Influenza A(H3), zero for Influenza A(H1))
- 53 for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19)
- 76 for RSV

Table 2.1: Pathogens detected, and sample positivity for samples from symptomatic patients from the Wales Sentinel GP and Sentinel Pharmacy networks, week 50, 2024.

Pathogens Detected	Count (n)	Positivity (current week)	Positivity (previous week)	Trend
Influenza A	103	23.9%	16.7%	Increasing
Rhinovirus	68	15.8%	12.3%	Increasing
RSV	57	13.2%	13.7%	Stable
Human metapneumovirus	20	4.6%	5.1%	Stable
Enterovirus	16	3.7%	3.2%	Stable
Parainfluenza	15	3.5%	3.9%	Stable
Adenovirus	14	3.2%	3.2%	Stable
Coronaviruses	12	2.8%	1.6%	Increasing
Influenza B	10	2.3%	2.3%	Stable
C. pneumoniae	10	2.3%	0.7%	Increasing
Bocavirus	6	1.4%	0.5%	Stable
SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)	5	1.2%	2.1%	Stable
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	3	0.7%	0.9%	Stable

Figure 2.1. Pathogens detected in samples from symptomatic patients from the Wales Sentinel GP and Sentinel Pharmacy networks, by week of sample collection, Week 50, 2023 to Week 50, 2024.



Data correct as of 18/12/2024

All Wales Datastore Respiratory Infection Testing

Table 2.2: Pathogens detected and sample positivity for samples collected from hospital and non-Sentinel GP patients, week 50, 2024.

Pathogens Detected	Count (n)	Positivity (current week)	Positivity (previous week)	Trend
Influenza A	313	21.1%	16.2%	Increasing
RSV	180	12.1%	15.3%	Decrease
Rhinovirus	156	10.5%	11.8%	Decrease
SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)	51	3.4%	4.5%	Decrease
Parainfluenza	48	3.2%	2.6%	Stable
Adenovirus	46	3.1%	3.4%	Stable
Human metapneumovirus	30	2.0%	2.2%	Stable
Enterovirus	21	1.4%	2.1%	Stable
Seasonal coronaviruses	9	0.6%	0.6%	Stable
Influenza B	3	0.2%	0.5%	Stable
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	2	0.1%	0.1%	Stable
Bocavirus	1	0.1%	0.0%	Stable
Chlamydia	0	0.0%	0.0%	Stable

Figure 2.2. Pathogens detected in samples collected from hospital and non-Sentinel GP patients, by week of sample collection, Week 50, 2023 to Week 50, 2024.

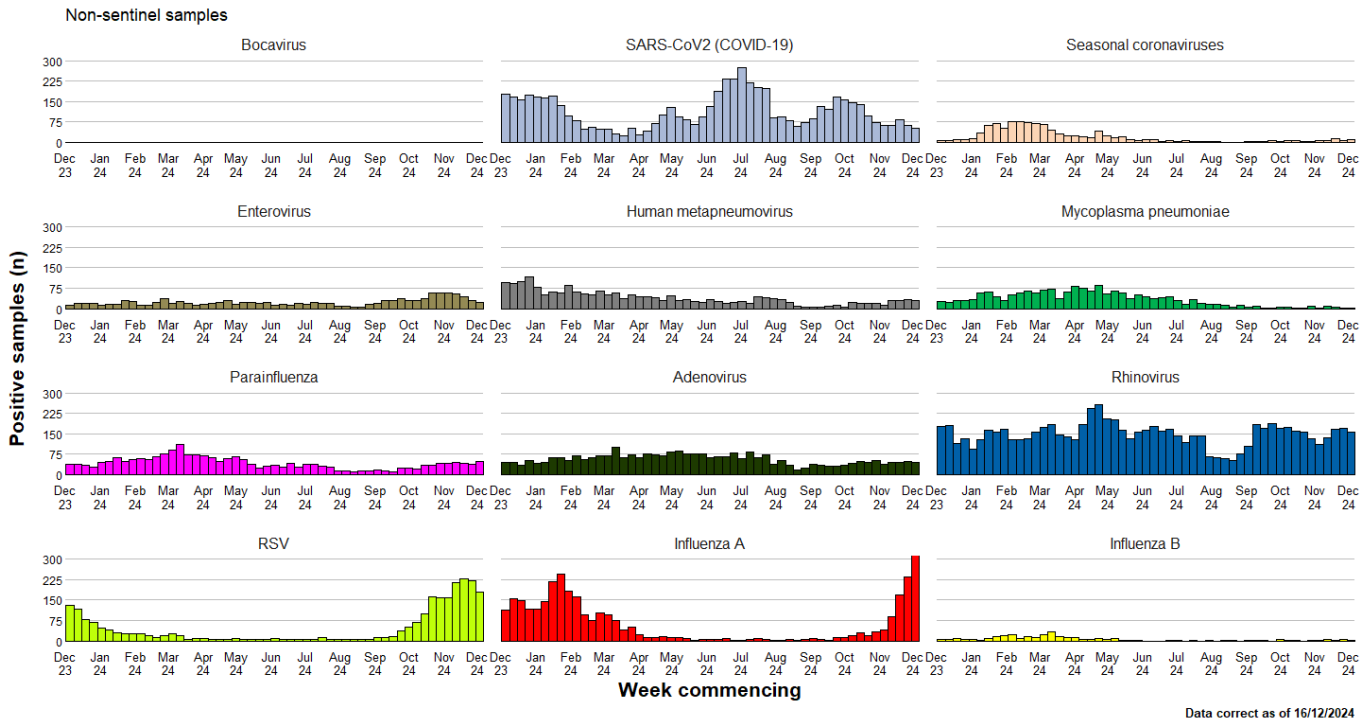
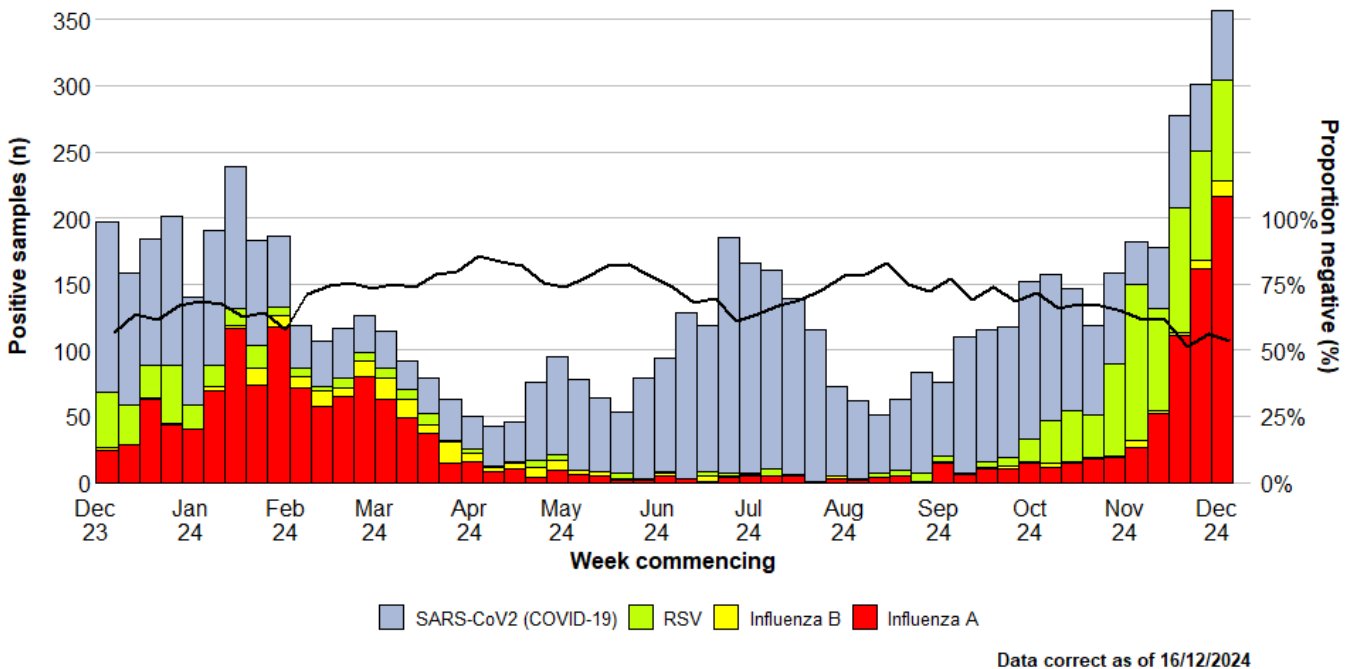


Figure 2.3. Samples from hospital patients submitted for RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV2 testing only, by week of sample collection, Week 50, 2023 to Week 50, 2024.





3. Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) and surveillance in hospitals

Sentinel SARI in emergency departments

- During week 49, 2024 there were 129 surveillance samples taken from SARI surveillance sentinel emergency departments. The most common pathogen identified from these samples was RSV(45) followed by Rhinovirus/Enterovirus(13) and Influenza A(9). Of the 129 samples collected, 45.7% were negative for all respiratory pathogens, (Table 3.1).
- During this time, the proportions of symptomatic patients attending sentinel emergency departments due to acute respiratory symptoms testing positive were 7% for influenza, 3% for SARS-CoV2 and 35% for RSV.

Hospital in-patients

- During week ending 15/12/2024 there were 335 patients admitted to hospital with confirmed COVID-19, RSV or influenza, (73 more than the previous week), equating to 6% of all hospital admissions in that reporting week.
- At 23:59 on 15/12/2024, there were 778 patients in hospital with confirmed COVID-19, RSV or influenza, 90 more than the previous Sunday. This equates to 8% of all hospital in-patients (IPs) at that time. Of whom 66% (513) were hospital acquired (HA).

Critical-care

- During week ending 15/12/2024 there were 22 ARI critical care (CC) admissions, (5 more than the previous week), Equating to 13% of all CC admissions in that reporting week.
- At 23:59 on 15/12/2024, there were 27 patients in CC with confirmed COVID-19, RSV or influenza, 8 more than the previous Sunday. This equates to 18% of all CC in-patients at that time. Of whom 30% (8) were hospital acquired (HA).

Virological surveillance in ICU

- During week 50, 2024, 64 respiratory samples were tested from patients in intensive care units (ICU). Of these: six tested positive for Influenza, five tested positive for RSV and two tested positive for SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19) (Figure 3.4).

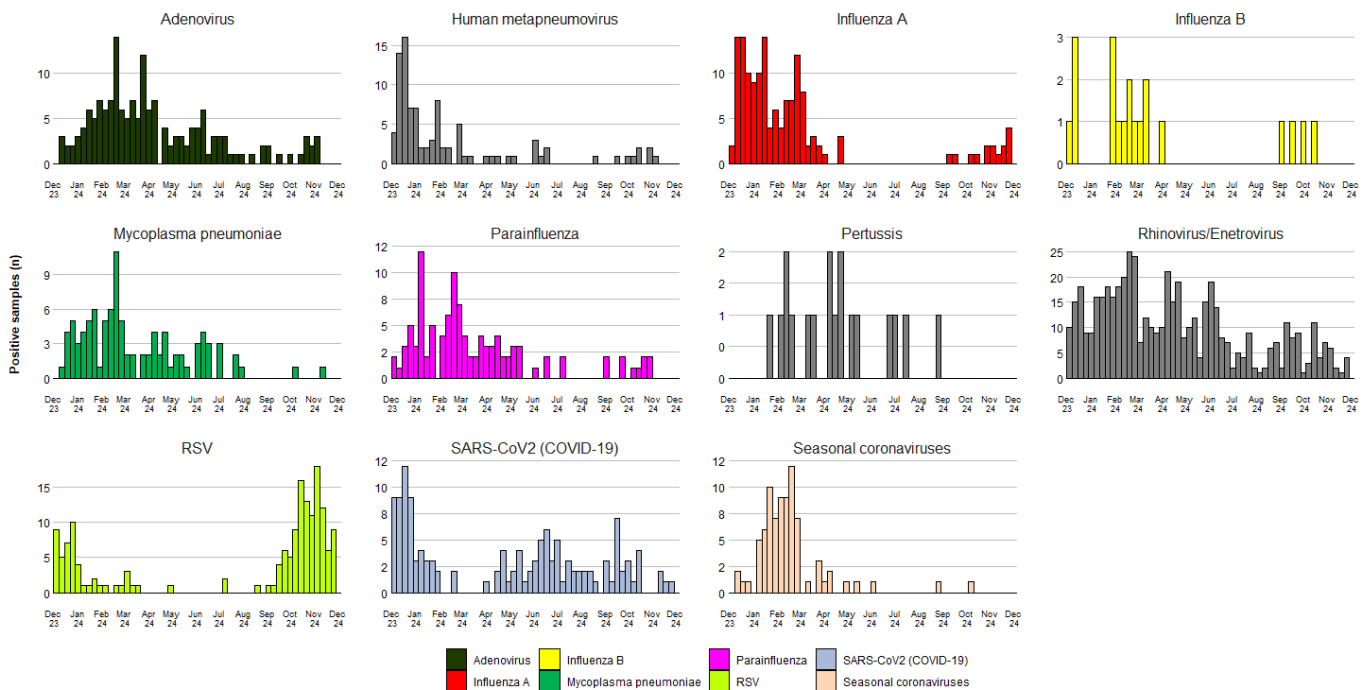
For detailed reports on surveillance of ARI in hospitals, including breakdowns by health board and age-group see: [Hospital admissions dashboard](#)

Wales Sentinel SARI Emergency Department Network

Table 3.1 Pathogens detected and sample positivity for samples collected from symptomatic patients presenting at participating SARI surveillance sentinel emergency departments, for week 49, 2024.

Pathogens Detected	Meeting SARI case definition in the last 4 weeks		Meeting SARI case definition in the last 12 months	
	n	%	n	%
Adenovirus	3	2.3%	164	7.2%
C. pneumoniae	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Human metapneumovirus	1	0.8%	94	4.2%
Influenza A	9	7.0%	157	6.9%
Influenza B	0	0.0%	20	0.9%
Mycoplasma pneumoniae	1	0.8%	98	4.3%
Parainfluenza	0	0.0%	107	4.7%
Pertussis	0	0.0%	18	0.8%
RSV	45	34.9%	163	7.2%
Rhinovirus/Enterovirus	13	10.1%	521	23.0%
SARS-CoV2 (COVID-19)	4	3.1%	133	5.9%
Seasonal coronaviruses	0	0.0%	85	3.8%
Negative	59	45.7%	1,015	44.8%
Total	129	100%	2,355	100%

Figure 3.1 Pathogens detected in samples collected from symptomatic patients presenting at participating SARI surveillance sentinel emergency departments, for week 49, 2024 and previous 12 months.



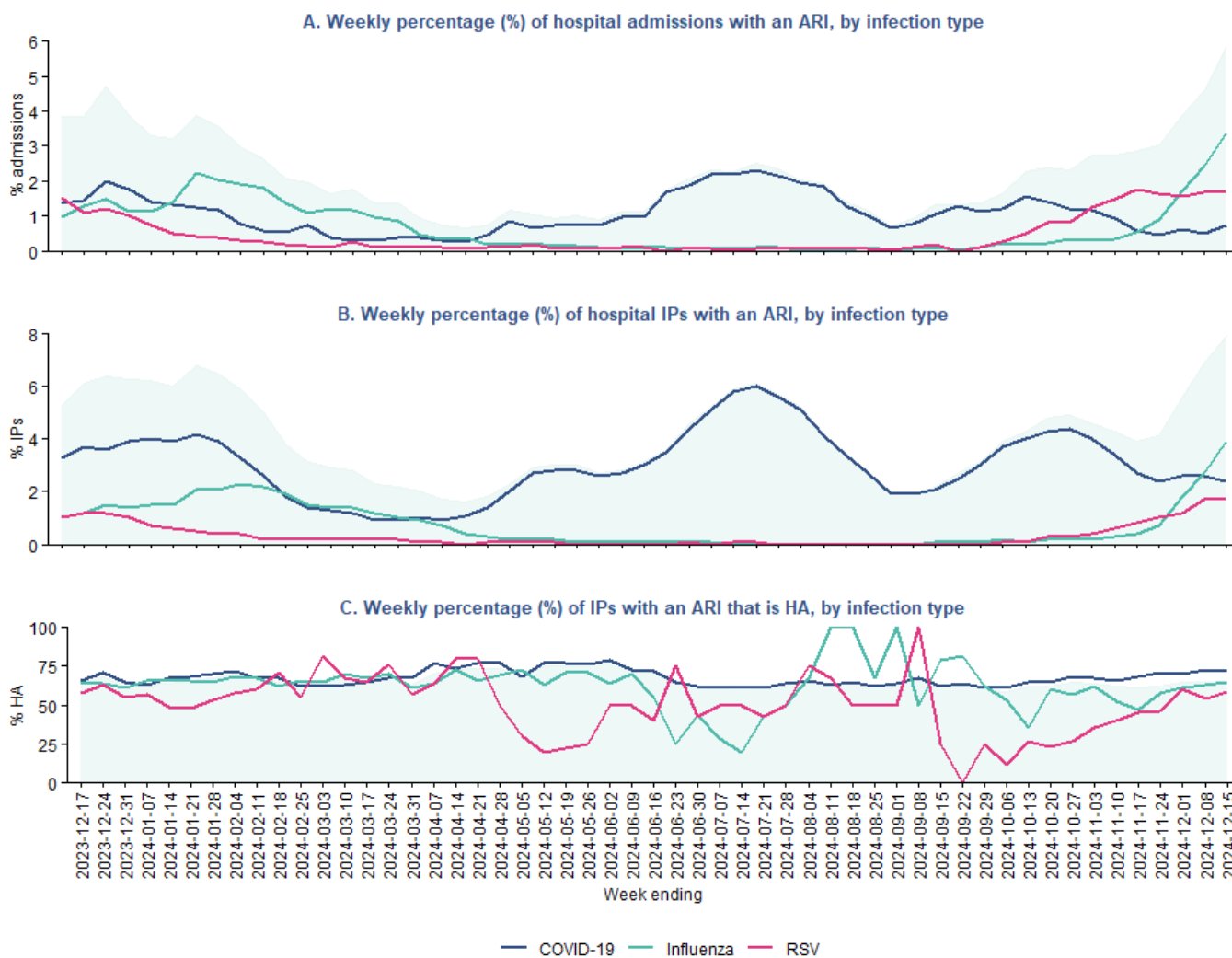
Data correct as of 12/12/2024

Acute Respiratory Infection Surveillance in Hospital In-Patients

Table 3.2. Hospital admissions in patients confirmed **with** COVID-19, influenza and RSV (acute respiratory infection may not necessarily be the primary cause of admission).

Infection	Hospital admissions		Hospital In-patients		
	Count	% of all admissions	Count	% of all IPs	% HA (n)
COVID-19	42	1%	235	2%	72% (169)
Influenza	195	3%	379	4%	65% (247)
RSV	98	2%	164	2%	59% (97)
ARI total	335	6%	778	8%	66% (513)

Figure 3.2. (A) Weekly percentage of hospital admissions where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (B) Weekly percentage of total in-patients where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (C) Weekly percentage of total number of in-patients with confirmed COVID-19, influenza or RSV where the infection was healthcare acquired.



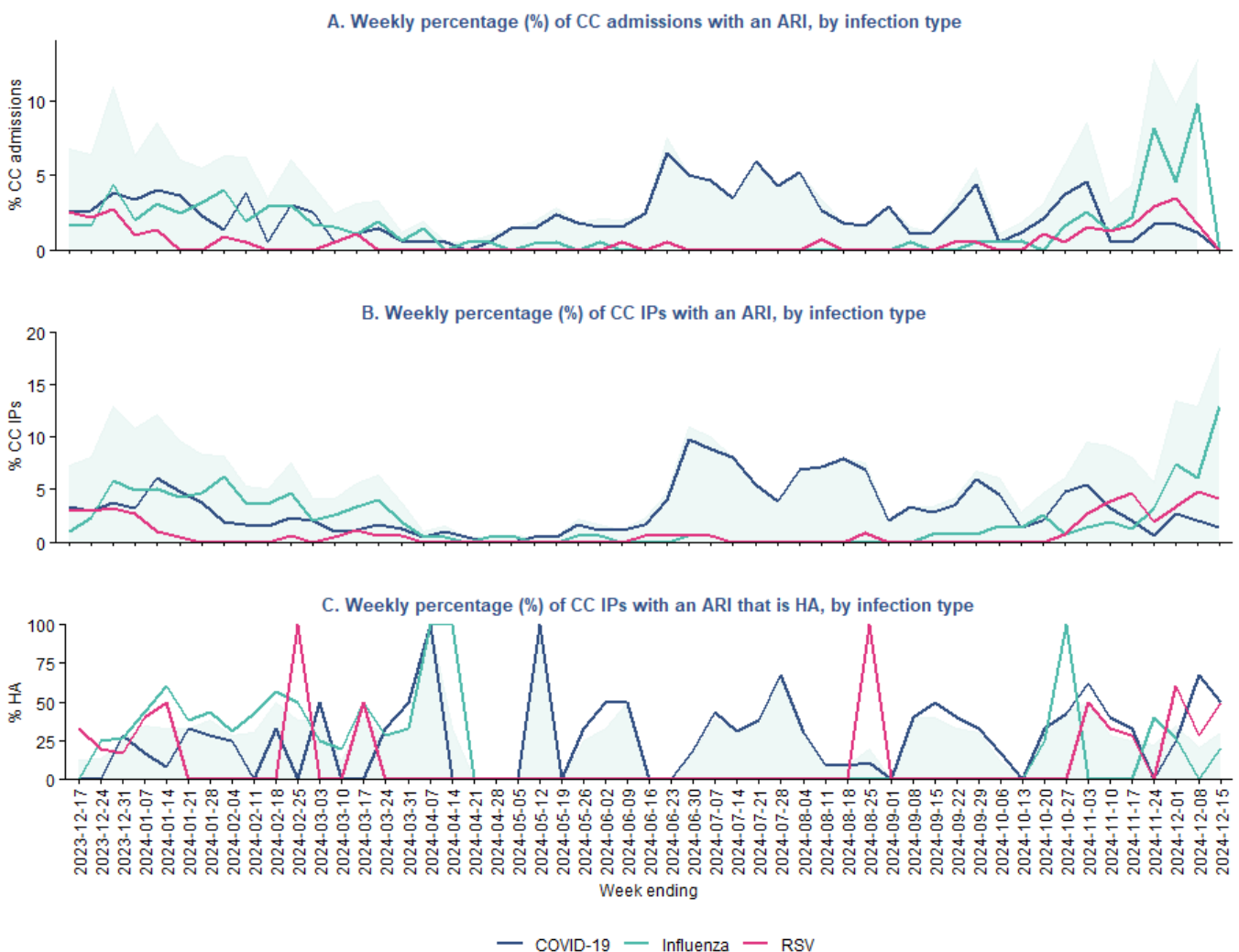
Data as of: 18-12-2024

Acute Respiratory Infection Surveillance in Critical-Care In-Patients

Table 3.3. Critical care (CC) admissions in patients confirmed with COVID-19, influenza and RSV (acute respiratory infection may not necessarily be the primary cause of admission).

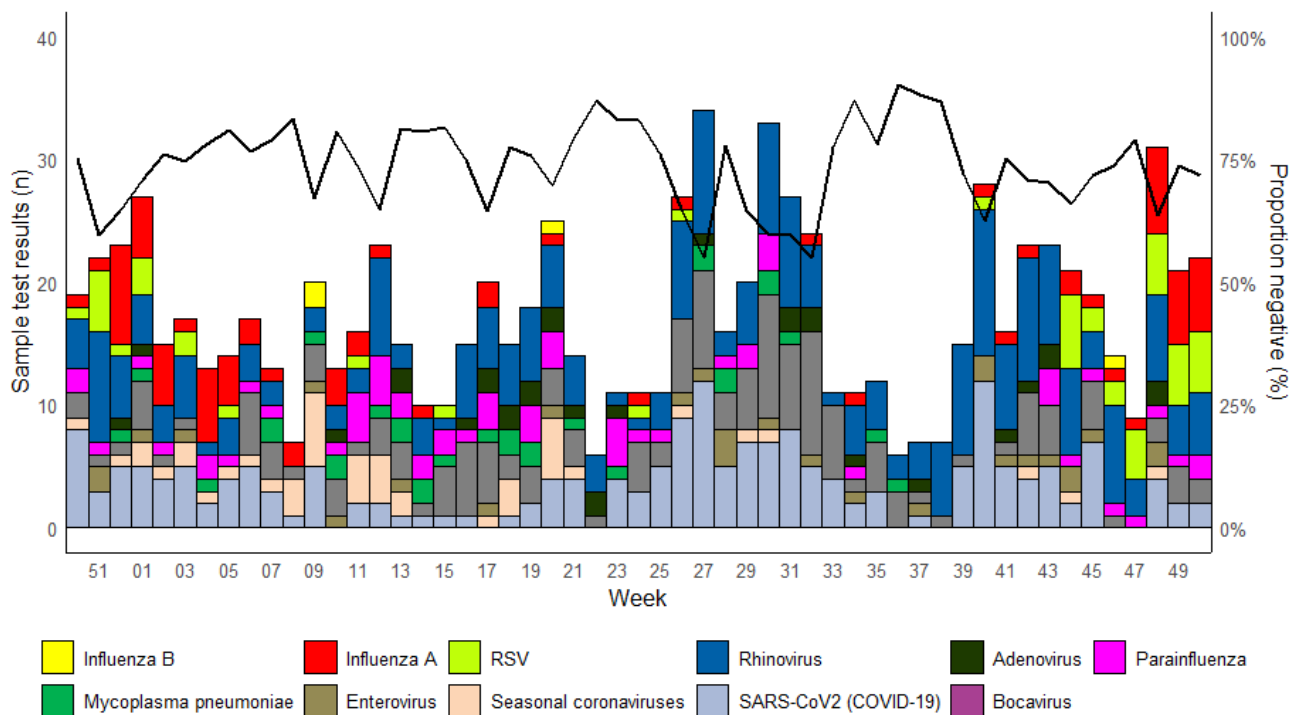
Infection	CC admissions		CC In-patients		
	Count	% of all CC admissions	Count	% of all CC In-patients	% HA (n)
COVID-19	2	1%	2	1%	50% (1)
Influenza	17	10%	19	13%	21% (4)
RSV	3	2%	6	4%	50% (3)
ARI total	22	13%	27	18%	30% (8)

Figure 3.3. (A) Weekly percentage of critical-care admissions where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (B) Weekly percentage of total critical-care inpatients where influenza, COVID-19 or RSV was confirmed. (C) Weekly percentage of total number of critical-care inpatients with confirmed COVID-19, influenza or RSV where the infection was healthcare acquired.



Data as of: 18-12-2024

Figure 3.4. Samples submitted for virological testing from ICU patients, by week of sample collection, Week 50, 2023 to Week 50, 2024. The black line indicates the percentage of samples which tested negative for any of the pathogens listed.



4. Settings-based surveillance and outbreaks

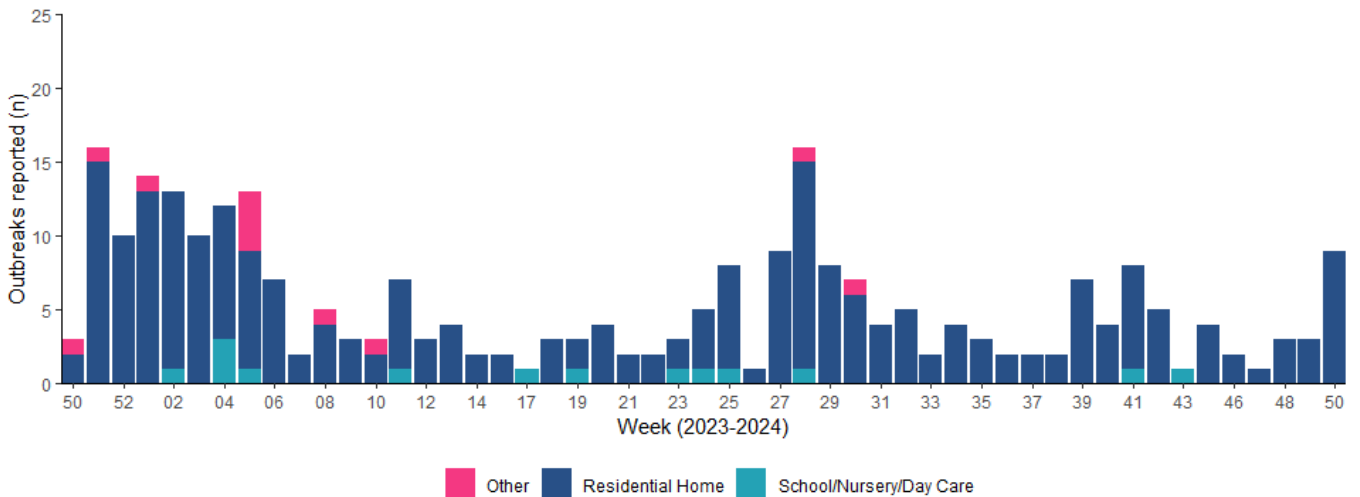
Acute Respiratory Infection Outbreaks Reported to Public Health Wales Health Protection Team

During week 50, 2024, 9 ARI outbreaks were reported to the Public Health Wales Health Protection Team.

Of these:

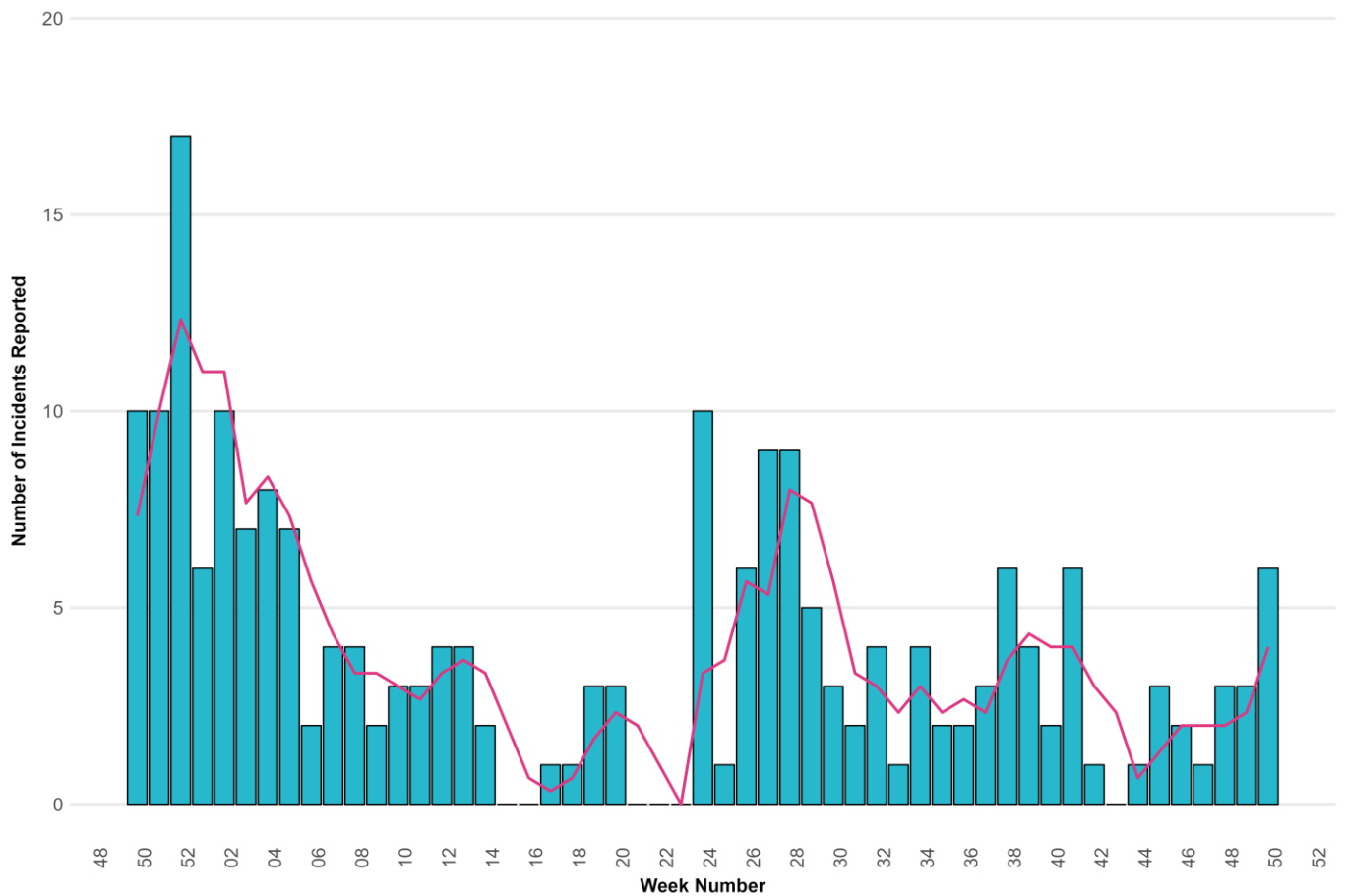
- One was Acute Respiratory Illness, five were Influenza A, one was Influenza Like Illness, and two were Rsv
- One was in a Residential Home, five were in a Residential Home, one was in a Residential Home, and two were in a Residential Home

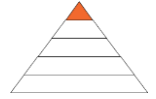
Figure 4.1. ARI outbreaks and incidents reported to Public Health Wales Health Protection Team, by setting and week of report. Completeness of reporting for outbreaks and incidents from schools/nurseries and other community settings is unknown.



Data correct as of 16/12/2024

Figure 4.2. ARI outbreaks and incidents reported to Public Health Wales Health Protection Team, from residential care home settings, by week of onset of first case. The three-week rolling average is shown in pink.

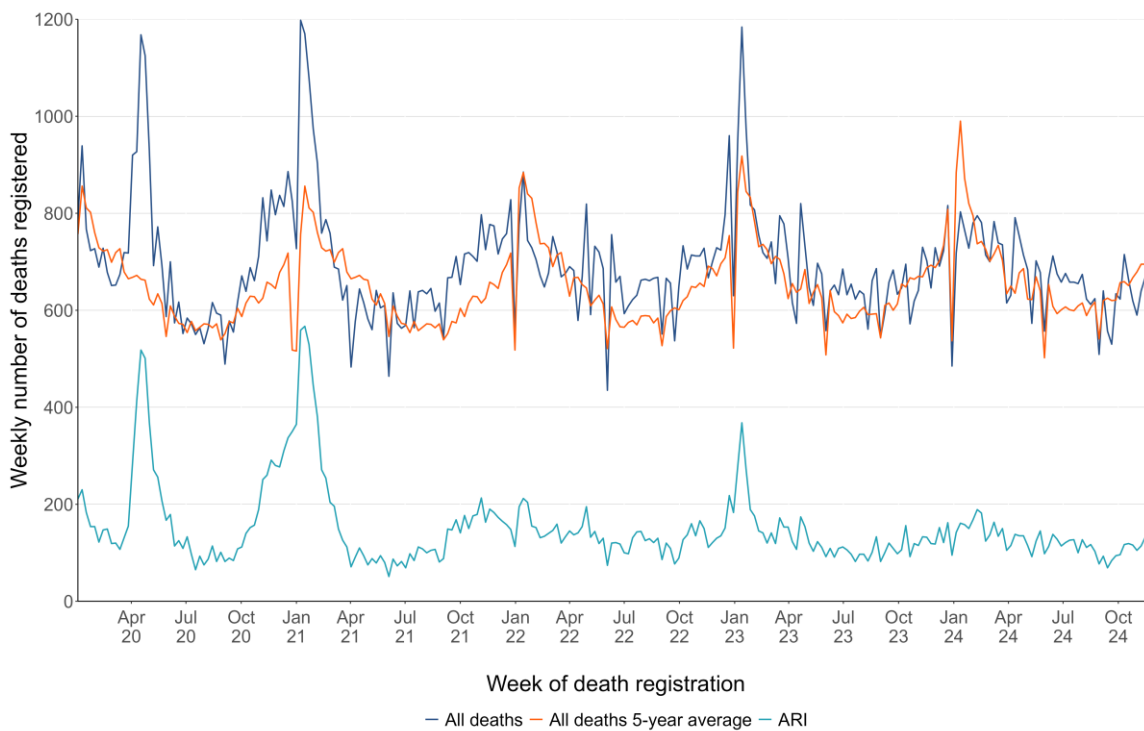




5. Mortality surveillance

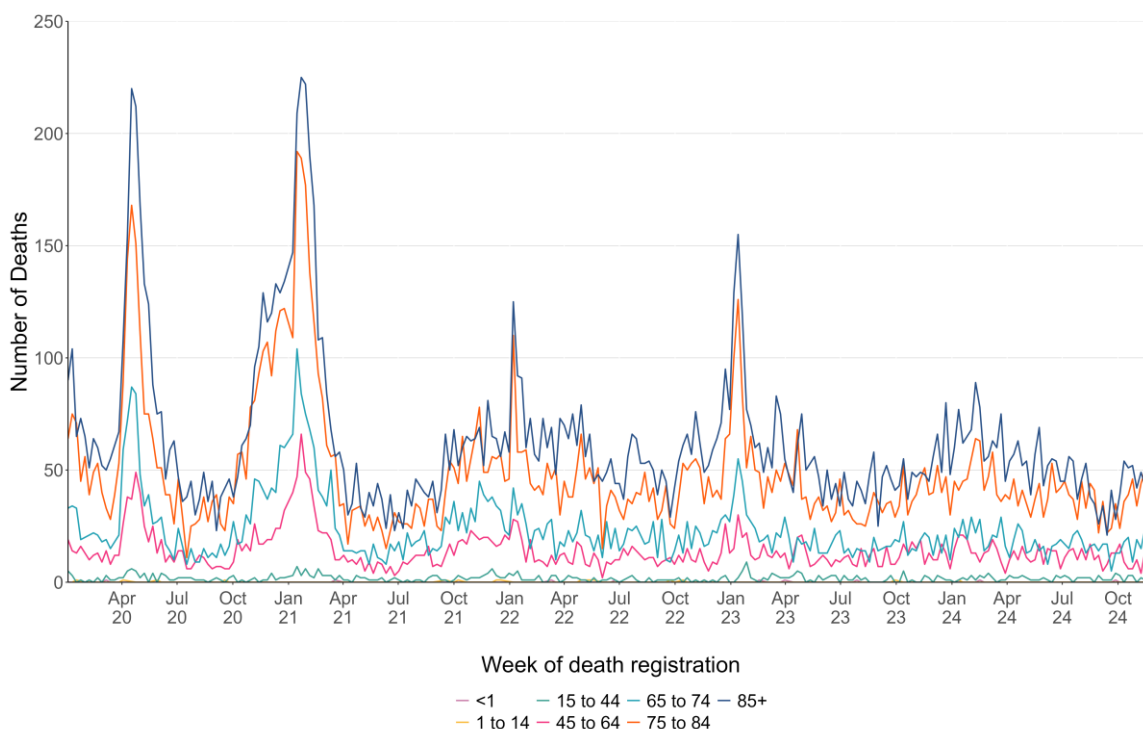
- During week 49, according to European Mortality Monitoring (EuroMoMo) methods, 'no excess' was reported in the weekly number of deaths from all causes in Wales.
- Breakdowns of all-cause and ARI specific mortality, according to data from deaths registrations provided by the Office for National Statistics are summarised by week, age-group, setting of death and deprivation quintile of residence in Figures 5.2 to 5.4. Data for the most recent weeks in these summaries should be interpreted with caution due to potential reporting delays.
- Deaths relating to ARI have been defined using the following ICD10 codes: (J09-J22, J80, U07.1, U07.2 and J04)

Figure 5.1. Number of deaths registered (any cause), 5-year average (any cause) and deaths relating to ARI, by week of death registration.



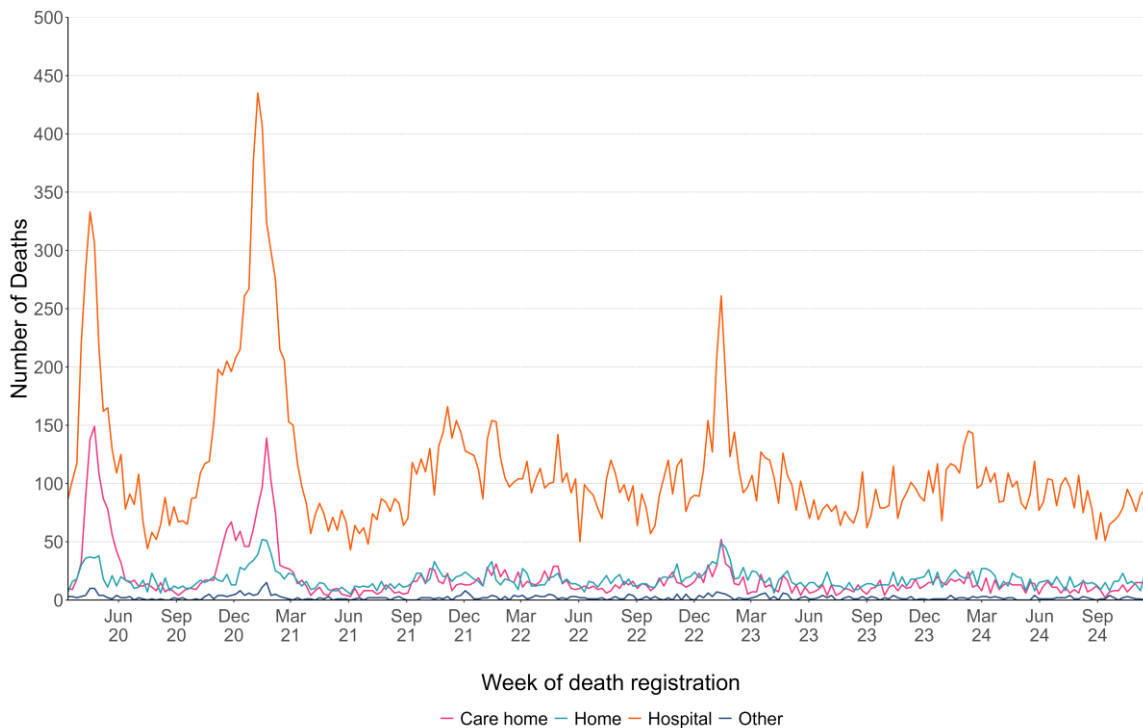
Data as of 17/12/2024

Figure 5.2 Numbers of ARI related deaths by age-group and week of death registration.



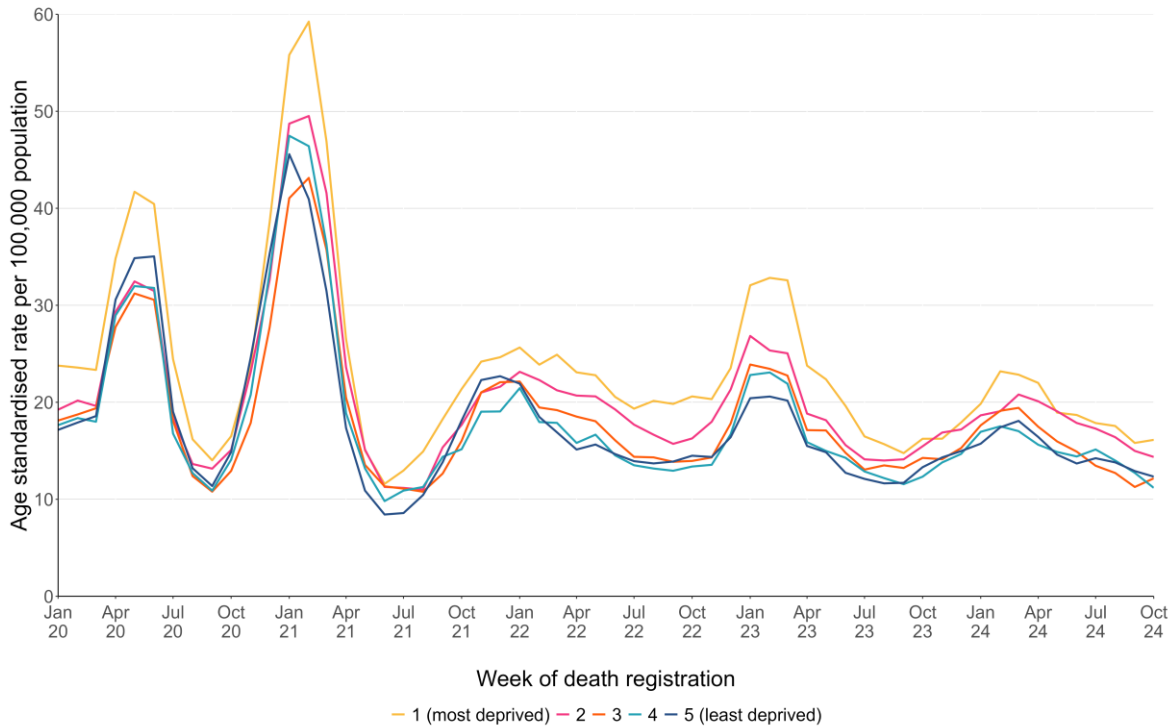
Data as of 17/12/2024

Figure 5.3. Numbers of deaths due to ARI, by place of death and week of death registration.



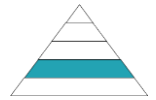
Data as of 17/12/2024

Figure 5.4. Numbers of ARI deaths, by quintile of deprivation of area of residence (based on the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation rankings of Lower Super Output Areas) and week of death registration.



Data as of 17/12/2024

For interactive versions of these data, including health board specific breakdowns, see: [ONS mortality dashboard](#)

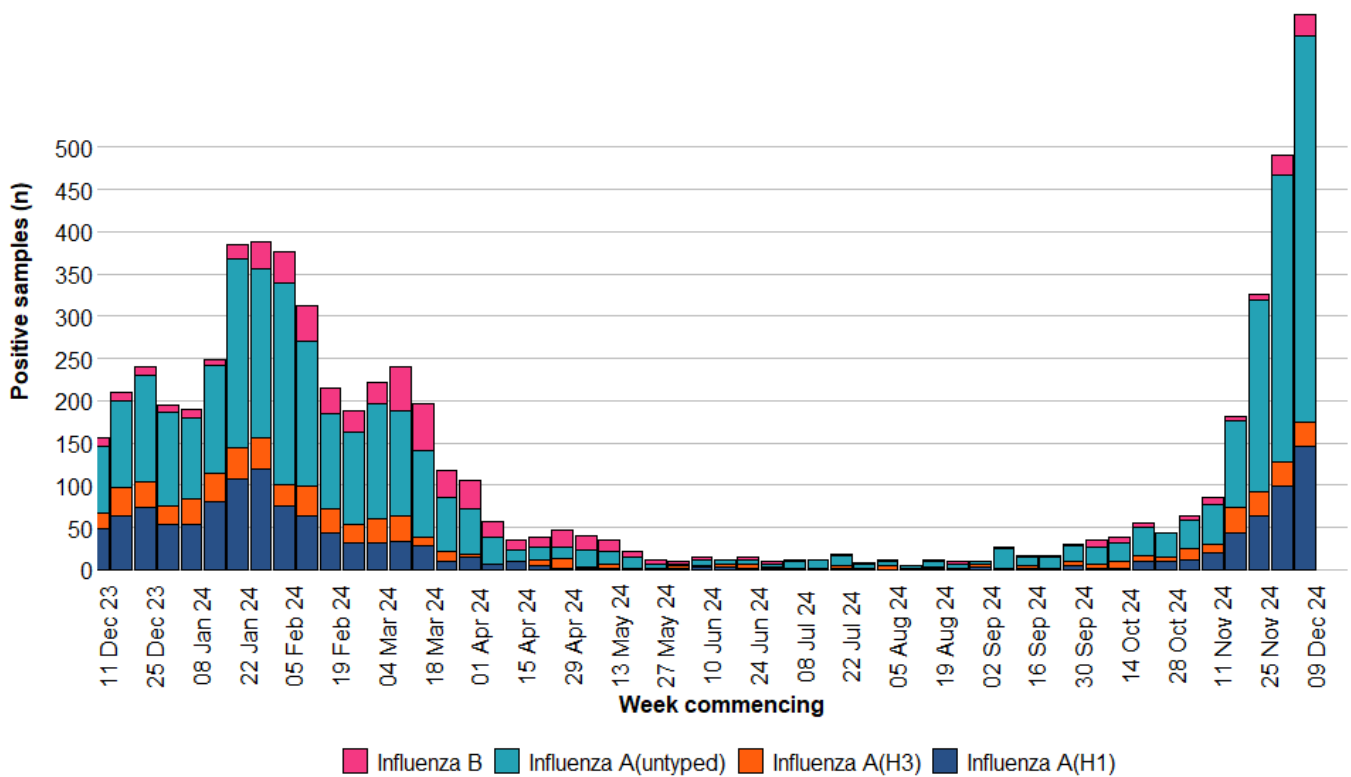


6. Pathogen-specific surveillance

Influenza

- influenza A(H1N1) is the most commonly detected influenza subtype in Wales since week 40 2024 (411 confirmed cases), followed by influenza A(H3N2) (167 confirmed cases) and influenza B (98 confirmed cases). Additionally, there have been 1331 untyped Influenza A cases.

Figure 6.1. Influenza subtypes based on samples submitted for virological testing by Sentinel GPs and community pharmacies, hospital patients, and non-Sentinel GPs, by week of sample collection, Week 50, 2023 to Week 50, 2024.

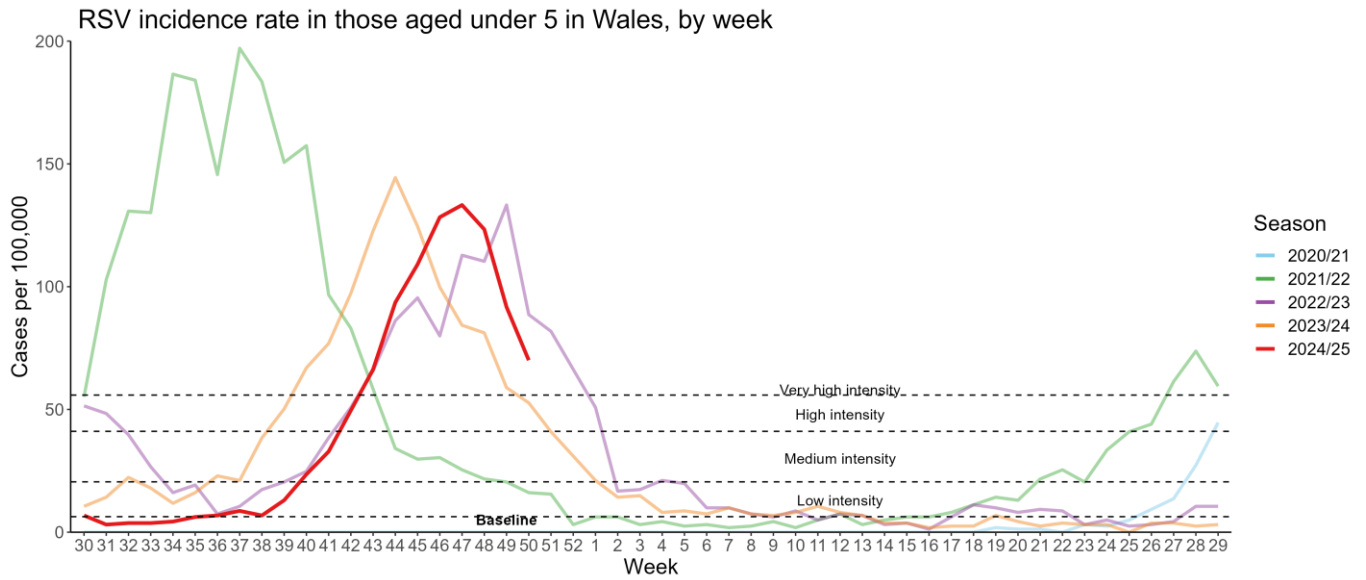


Data correct as of 16/12/2024

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

- RSV incidence per 100,000 population in children aged under five years is currently at very high (70.0) intensity levels per 100,000 population during week 50 2024.

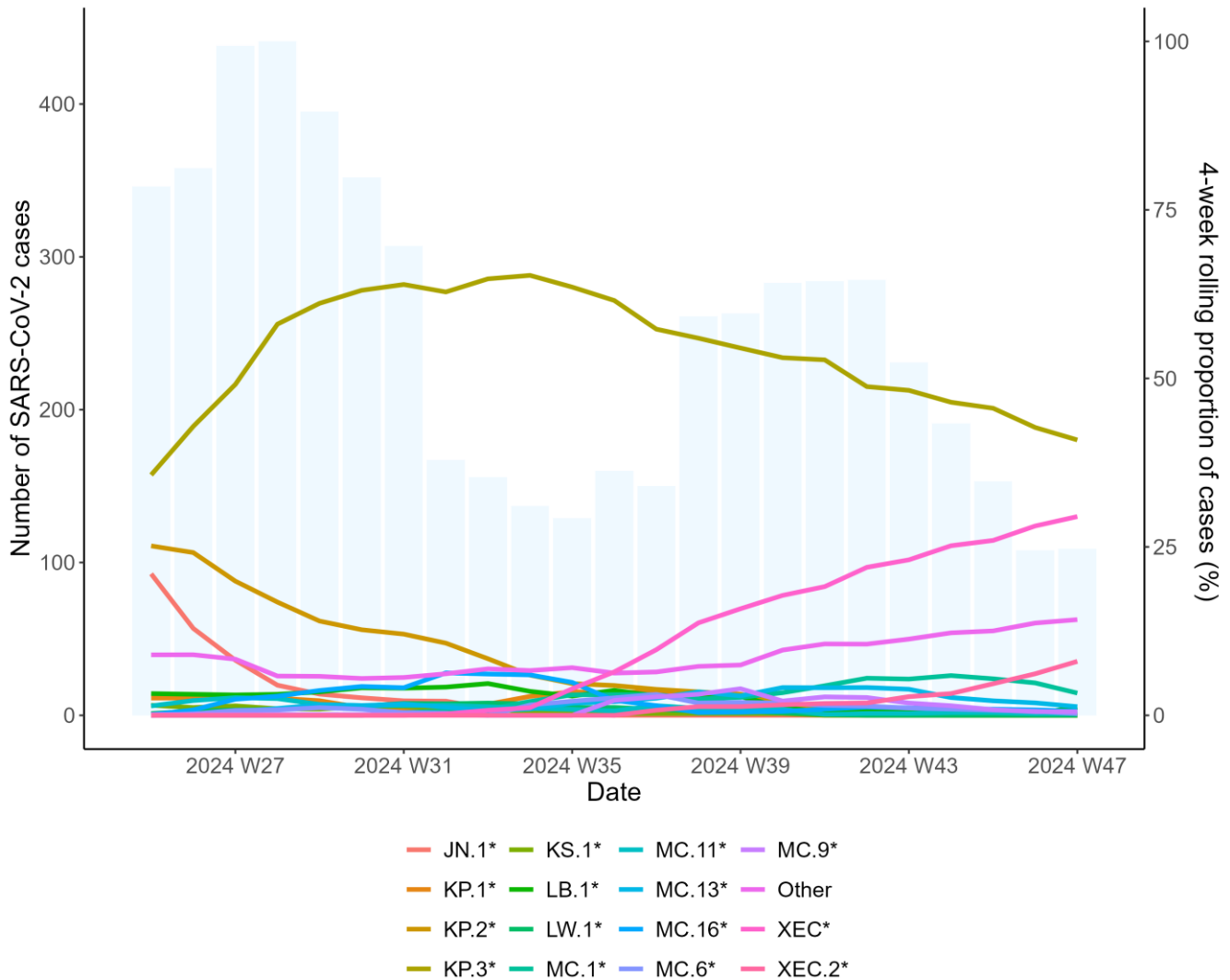
Figure 6.2. RSV incidence rate per 100,000 population aged under five years, weeks 30 2020 to week 50 2024.



SARS-CoV-2 Variant surveillance

- Pango group KP.3* is the most frequently detected variant in Wales currently, accounting for 43.7% of sequenced cases in the previous six weeks.

Figure 6.3. Weekly number of SARS-CoV-2 cases (bars) and the 4-week rolling average proportion of sequenced cases attributed to each Pango lineage group (lines) from residents in Wales for the past six months (2024 W21 to 2024 W48).



For detailed information on genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in Wales, please see: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection/viz/COVID-19genomicsurveillance/Summary>

7. International Summary

Influenza activity – UK and international summary

- As of Week 49, GP ILI consultations increased to 8.5 per 100,000 in England and in Northern Ireland at 13.3 per 100,000 and increased to 15.3 per 100,000 in Scotland.
- During Week 49, 6,679 samples testing positive for influenza were reported in England of which 939 were positive for influenza (506 influenza A (not subtyped), 49 influenza A (H3N2), 360 influenza A (H1N1)pdm09, and 25 influenza B). Overall influenza positivity increased to 14.1% in England in Week 49, was increased to 22.4% in Northern Ireland and increased to 25.1% in Scotland in Week 49.
- UK summary data are available from the [UKHSA Influenza and COVID-19 Surveillance Report, Respiratory surveillance report | HSC Public Health Agency](#) and [COVID-19 & Respiratory Surveillance \(shinyapps.io\)](#)
- The WHO and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) reported during week 49, that influenza positivity is above the 10% positivity epidemic threshold at 14%. Of the 29 countries and areas reporting on influenza intensity, three reported medium intensity or higher. Of the 28 countries and areas reporting on geographic spread of influenza viruses within a country or area, seven reported widespread or regional distribution. There were 422 confirmed influenza virus infection detections reported from sentinel primary care. **Source:** European Respiratory Virus Surveillance Summary (ERVISS): <https://erviss.org/>
- The WHO reported on 12/12/2024, based on data up to 01/12/2024 that in the Northern hemisphere influenza activity in temperate countries remained at interepidemic levels. Elevated activity was observed in parts of Northern Europe (mostly A(H1N1)pdm09 detected), Eastern Europe, Central America and the Caribbean (mostly A(H3N2)), Western Africa (mostly A(H3N2) and B), Middle Africa (mostly A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2)), Western Asia (due to co-circulation of influenza viruses), Southern Asia (mostly A(H1N1)pdm09) and South East Asia (mostly A(H1N1)pdm09 and B).
- In the Southern hemisphere, influenza activity was elevated in single countries in Tropical South America (due mostly to B viruses) and Eastern Africa (due mostly to B viruses). **Source:** WHO influenza update: <https://www.who.int/teams/global-influenza-programme/surveillance-and-monitoring/influenza-updates/current-influenza-update>
- Based on FluNet reporting (as of 10/12/2024), during week 48, globally there were 2,823 A(H1N1), 895 A(H3), 6,214 A(not subtyped), 212 influenza B (Victoria) and 1,579 influenza B(lineage not determined) **Source:** [Flu Net: flunetchart](#)

Update on influenza activity in North America

- The USA Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report that influenza activity levels were low during week 49 (ending 07/12/2024). Nationally, 4,151 (5.1%) out of 81,992 specimens have tested positive for influenza in week 49 in clinical laboratories nationwide, of these positive samples, 3,924 (94.5%) were influenza A and 227 (5.5%) were influenza B. Further characterisation has been carried out on 1,363 specimens by public health laboratories, and 621 samples tested positive for influenza; 168 influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, 261 influenza A(H3N2), 174 influenza A(not subtyped), 0 influenza H5, and 18 influenza B. **Source:** CDC Weekly US Influenza Surveillance Report: [FluView | FluView | CDC](#)
- The Public Health Agency of Canada reported that during week 49, influenza activity remained low but increasing compared to the previous week. During week 49, 876 influenza detections were

reported: 824 influenza A and 52 influenza B. Source: <https://health-infobase.canada.ca/respiratory-virus-surveillance/>

Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) in North America

The USA CDC reported that the RSV positivity rate decreased in week 49.

Source: CDC RSV national trends: [National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System | CDC](#)

Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) – latest update from WHO and ECDC

- WHO was notified of one new MERS cases on 5 September 2024 by the Ministry of Health of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- Since the beginning of the year, five cases including four deaths have been reported from KSA. WHO Global Alert and Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>
- Rapid risk assessments of the situation from ECDC, which contain epidemiological updates and advice for travellers and healthcare workers, are available from: <https://ecdc.europa.eu/en/middle-east-respiratory-syndrome-coronavirus>
- Further updates and advice for healthcare workers and travellers are available from WHO: <http://www.who.int/emergencies/mers-cov/en/> and from NaTHNaC: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/news/237/mers-cov-update-travelhealthpro-country-pages>

Human infection with avian influenza A

- The WHO has published an updated assessment of recent influenza A(H5N1) virus events in animals and people. Currently, the global public health risk of influenza A(H5N1) viruses to be low, while the risk of infection for occupationally exposed persons is low to moderate, depending on the risk mitigation measures in place. Transmission between animals continues to occur and, to date, a limited number of human infections have been reported. 14 August 2024: [https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-joint-fao-who-woah-assessment-of-recent-influenza-a\(h5n1\)-virus-events-in-animals-and-people](https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/updated-joint-fao-who-woah-assessment-of-recent-influenza-a(h5n1)-virus-events-in-animals-and-people)
Other updates on zoonotic influenza infections and risks to humans are available from the WHO Global Alert & Response website: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/disease-outbreak-news>

8. Notes on interpretation

Hospital/critical care (CC) admission: A hospital/CC admission that involves a minimum of 1 overnight stay. N.B. Transfers to another hospitals within the same health board (HB) are counted as the same continuous inpatient stay.

ARI hospital/CC admission: A hospital/CC admission where the patient tested positive for an ARI infection in the community within 28 days prior to the admission date or in hospital up to 2 days after admission (where the date of admission is day 1).

Hospital/CC inpatient (IP): A patient admitted to hospital/CC on or before the specified date, with a minimum of 1 overnight stay who had not been discharged from hospital/CC by 23:59 of the specified date.

ARI hospital/CC IP: A hospital/CC IP who tested positive for an ARI in hospital or in the community within the previous 28 days. Hospital acquired (HA): An IP whose first positive ARI test was taken in hospital more than 7 days after admission for COVID-19 or more than 3 days after admission for Influenza and RSV.

9. Statement of voluntary application of the Code of Practice for Statistics

The Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre in Public Health Wales publishes a weekly integrated respiratory infection summary. This report highlights the latest available information from a number of Public Health Wales surveillance schemes, reports and other sources on Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI) in Wales.

Our publications are categorised as management information and this statement outlines the steps taken towards voluntary adoption of the Code of Practice for Statistics to ensure that our publications are high quality, useful for supporting decisions and well-respected. The code is built around 3 pillars:

- **Trustworthiness:** confidence in the people and organisations that produce statistics and data
- **Quality:** data and methods that produce assured statistics
- **Value:** publishing statistics that support society's needs for information

Trustworthiness

This report (and the underlying analysis) has been developed by a team of epidemiologists and analysts under the guidance of senior scientists and consultants. We work as part of a wider integrated respiratory surveillance group, which brings together expertise in virology, epidemiology, genomics and surveillance. Key information summarised in this surveillance report is routinely shared with UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), World Health Organisation (WHO) and other international networks to enable international surveillance and epidemiological studies. Appropriate disclosure control methods have been considered and applied.

The report is published on a weekly basis during winter period between week 40 (October) and 20 (May) of the following year and on a fortnightly basis during the summer period. Where there are interruptions to data flows, or other technical issues affecting the production of elements of the report, we highlight in the text as appropriate. Where there are unplanned delays to publication we inform our stakeholders. We highlight key changes in the report when necessary.

Quality

We are continuously seeking to improve the quality of our surveillance. Where possible, ARI surveillance schemes in Wales follow, or are working towards following, good practice recommendations and international guidance (e.g. the [WHO MOSAIC framework](#), using professional judgement. The surveillance team routinely consults with other UK teams and international specialists. Where there are limitations in data or interpreting data, we try to specify and continue work to address them.

Value

This information contributes to many areas, including response to health threats, public health interventions, healthcare planning and research. There are also society benefits from making this information available, supporting transparency and providing timely access for the scientific community, public health specialists and the public. This in turn reduces the onus on our stakeholders to request information, releasing capacity or further development of our outputs. We aim to present epidemiological and virological data in meaningful and accessible ways to help meet the needs of different audiences. However, we aspire to improve in this, with improved understanding of user-needs. We have also included links to other related reports and resources to avoid duplication of data presentation.

10. Links to surveillance reports from other countries

Public Health Wales influenza surveillance webpage: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/flu vaccine/weekly-influenza-and-acute-respiratory-infection-report/>

Public Health Wales COVID-19 data dashboard: <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/latest-information-on-novel-coronavirus-covid-19/>

Public Health Wales interactive report on hospitalisations in influenza and RSV cases: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/public.health.wales.health.protection/viz/ARI-Hospitaladmissionsdashboard/ARIHospitaladmissionsdashboard?publish=yes>

NICE influenza antiviral usage guidance: <http://www.nice.org.uk/Guidance/TA158>

England influenza and COVID-19 surveillance: National flu and COVID-19 surveillance reports: 2024 to 2025 season - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Scotland seasonal respiratory surveillance: Publications - Public Health Scotland

Northern Ireland influenza surveillance: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/seasonal-influenza>

European Centre for Communicable Disease: <http://ecdc.europa.eu/>

European influenza information: <http://flunewseurope.org/>

Advice on influenza immunisation <https://phw.nhs.wales/topics/immunisation-and-vaccines/flu vaccine/>

Advice on influenza immunisation (for intranet users) Influenza (sharepoint.com)

For further information on this report, please email Public Health Wales using: surveillance.requests@wales.nhs.uk